

**Qualification Standard for Policy Analysis and  
Administrative Analysis Positions**

*Policy analysis positions*

The requirements for individual policy analysis positions will differ, depending on their grade level and their organizational location. Factors such as the perspectives of top policy officials and sensitivity to organizational mission and objectives influence the nature of the responsibilities placed on a policy analyst. The principal requirements for performing policy analysis functions are listed below, as appropriate to the position to be filled.

- Knowledge of a pertinent professional subject-matter field(s). Typically there is a direct, even critical, relationship between the possession of subject-matter expertise and successful performance of analytical assignments.
- Knowledge of economic theories including micro-economics and the effect of proposed policies on production costs and prices, wages, resource allocations, or consumer behavior; and/or macro-economics and the effect of proposed policies on income and employment, investment, interest rates, and price level.
- Knowledge of public policy issues related to a subject-matter field.
- Knowledge of the executive/legislative decision making process.
- Knowledge of pertinent research and analytical methodology and ability to apply such techniques to policy issues, such as:
  - Qualitative techniques, such as performing extensive inquiry into a wide variety of significant issues, problems, or proposals; determining data sources and relevance of findings and synthesizing information; evaluating tentative study findings and drawing logical conclusions; and identifying omissions, questionable assumptions, or inadequate data in the analytical work of others.
  - Quantitative methods, such as cost benefit analysis, design of computer simulation models

and statistical analysis including survey methods and regression analysis.

- Knowledge of the programs or organizations and activities to assess the political and institutional environment in which decisions are made and implemented.
- Skill in dealing with decision makers and their immediate staffs. Skill in interacting with other specialists and experts in the same or related fields.
- Ability to exercise judgment in all phases of analysis, ranging from sorting out the most important problems when dealing with voluminous amounts of information to ensure that the many facets of a policy issue are explored, to sifting evidence and developing feasible options or alternative proposals and anticipating policy consequences.
- Skill in effectively communicating highly complex technical material or highly complex issues that may have controversial findings, or both, using language appropriate to specialists and/or nonspecialists, facilitating the formulation of a decision.
- Skill in written communication to organize ideas and present findings in a logical manner with supporting, as well as adverse, criteria for specific issues, and to prepare material complicated by short deadlines and limited information.
- Skill in effective oral communication techniques to explain, justify, or discuss a variety of public issues requiring a logical presentation of appropriate facts and information or analysis.
- Ability to work effectively under the pressure of tight time frames and rigid deadlines.

Generally, candidate evaluation is based primarily on relevant academic achievement and/or experience. When evaluating a candidate's academic performance, agencies should determine the extent to which completed course work has contributed to a knowledge of policy analysis methods, microeconomic and macro-economic theories, social sciences, statistics, operations

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research, organizational theory, public finance, logic, or other subject-matter knowledge required to perform the work of the position.

Consideration should be given for active involvement in policy analysis organizations, presentation of technical papers, and participation in seminars. Technical publications should be weighed for their contributions to advancing policy in particular areas rather than on quantity.

Other sources of information that may be useful in evaluating candidates include: work products, e.g., reports, studies, articles, letters, and memoranda; reference inquiries; supervisory appraisals; personal interviews; and results of assessment center activities.

*Administrative analysis positions*

Administrative analysis work does not require specialized subject-matter knowledge, but does require other knowledge and skill to perform staff analytical, planning, and evaluative work concerned with the administrative and operational aspects of agency programs and management. Specifically, administrative analysis work requires:

- Knowledge of the overall mission, functions, and organization of the agency or component, including agency program operations, processes, goals, and objectives.
- Knowledge of the theories, principles, functions, and processes of management and the organization of work to conduct studies of work processes in various organizations to identify, analyze, and recommend solutions to problems or to develop planning guidance.

- Knowledge of evaluative, planning, and analytical processes and techniques (quantitative and qualitative) for measuring the effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity of administrative and technical programs.
- Ability to research problems and issues, including evaluating the content of new or modified legislation to determine its impact on the agency's programs or resources.
- Skill in written and oral communication to prepare briefings or recommendations to managers and negotiating solutions to disputed recommendations.
- Judgment in problem solving.

Candidate evaluation is based on a combination of relevant academic courses and experience. When evaluating a candidate's academic performance, agencies should determine the extent to which completed course work has contributed to a knowledge of management and analytical methods, statistics, organizational theory, public finance, logic or other knowledge required to perform the work of the position.

Consideration should be given for active involvement in public administration organizations, presentation of papers, and participation in seminars.

Other sources of information that may be useful in evaluating candidates include work products, e.g., reports, studies, articles, letters, and memoranda; reference inquiries; supervisory appraisals; personal interviews; and results of assessment center activities.